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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Ninth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST PART (PUBLIC)* OF THE 45th MEETING*

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 8 December 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. ALSTON

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* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document E/C.12/1993/SR.45/Add.1.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (agenda item 2) (continued)

1. The CHAIRPERSON, recalled the agreement reached by the Committee that no list of issues should be prepared in respect of countries due to present reports at the next session but that the member responsible for drafting the concluding observations should be requested to prepare a dossier on the country in question. He suggested the following allocation of work for the tenth session: Mr. Muterahejura - Mali; Mr. Simma - Mauritania; Mr. Grissa - Guinea; and Mr. Badawi - Gambia.

2. It was so decided.

3. The CHAIRPERSON suggested that the concluding observations adopted by the Committee on the first part of the report of Kenya should be sent to the Government in place of a new list of issues.

4. It was so decided.

5. The CHAIRPERSON reminded the Committee of its decision several sessions earlier to replace the triennial cycle whereby States parties reported on three articles of the Covenant at three-yearly intervals should be replaced by a single comprehensive report submitted every five years. On that occasion it had been agreed, as a transitional measure, that Governments already embarked on preparing reports in three separate parts should be permitted to continue doing so for the time being. Sufficient time had now elapsed for that arrangement to be terminated, and he therefore proposed that all reports submitted after 1 January 1995 should cover all articles of the Covenant.

6. Responding to points raised by Mr. TEXIER and Mrs. JIMÉNEZ BUTRAGUEÑO, he suggested that the Secretariat should be requested to write to all States parties informing them of the Committee's decision.

7. It was so decided.

8. Mr. TEXIER remarked that, in consequence of the decision just taken, Panama and the Dominican Republic should be added to the list of States parties reporting at the tenth session.

9. The CHAIRPERSON said that a revised list would be drawn up for circulation to non-governmental organizations and others.

10. Another general matter requiring the Committee's attention was that of the provision of advisory services, expressly referred to in articles 22 and 23 of the Covenant. In that connection, he wished to suggest that the Secretariat should be requested to report in writing on all advisory services projects with an economic, social and cultural rights component that had been undertaken thus far as well as on those that could be made available in future.

11. It was so decided.

12. The CHAIRPERSON said that he wished to raise the organizational issue of the documentation made available to the Committee. The Secretariat deserved to be commended for the work done in preparing country files for the current session. However, information from three of the most important sources within the United Nations system, namely, the World Bank, UNICEF and UNDP, was still not reaching the Committee in a consistent manner. In the past it had been possible to ascribe that state of affairs to the constraints of the cold war. Today, the situation had radically changed. UNICEF, for one, was already supplying information to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the World Bank had reversed its previous information policy by deciding that, from 1 January 1994, all its country-specific reports would be made public unless the Government in question had good reason to request otherwise. He suggested that the Committee should request the three organizations he had mentioned to provide it with all available country-specific information on a regular basis, and should authorize the Chairperson to write to the three organizations in those terms.

13. Mrs. JIMÉNEZ BUTRAGUEÑO supported that suggestion and added that members of the Committee should be encouraged to share all relevant information that was available to them with the Committee as a whole.

14. Mr. GRISSA expressed surprise that the Chairperson should have listed UNICEF rather than UNESCO among the most significant sources of information. The type of information UNICEF could provide would surely be of greater use to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

15. The CHAIRPERSON endorsed the point made by Mrs. Jiménez Butragueño. Any information that members could provide would be placed on the respective country file. As for the point raised by Mr. Grissa, he said that, in his view, UNESCO was not at present a very effective organization; indeed, it could be said to have seriously let down the Committee by dismissing any attempt to establish a linkage between educational and cultural matters on the one hand and human rights on the other.

16. Mrs. JIMÉNEZ BUTRAGUEÑO endorsed those remarks and stressed the usefulness of information supplied by UNICEF to the work of the Committee.

17. The CHAIRPERSON, replying to points raised by Mr. BADAWI and Mr. SIMMA, said that any information received would be forwarded to the respective country rapporteurs on the understanding that they would bring it with them to the next session of the Committee.

18. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee accepted the suggestion that he should write to the World Bank, UNICEF and UNDP along the lines he had indicated.

19. It was so decided.

The public meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.